

Resolution

State of South Carolina)
County of Sumter)
Special Joint Resolution)



[A Joint Resolution of the Sumter County School Boards for District Two and District Seventeen and the Sumter County Council Requesting that the Governor and General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Fully Address the State Budgetary Crisis without Shifting the Burden to Local Property Taxpayers Statewide, Either Directly or Indirectly; and to Invite the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senate President Pro Tempore, House Speaker Pro Tempore, and the Sumter County Legislative Delegation to Attend a Joint Worksession of the Aforementioned Entities in Sumter County, South Carolina At A Date, Time, and Place To Be Determined, to Experience Directly the Progress Made in Public Education and the Challenges Facing School Districts and Local Governments in South Carolina.]

WHEREAS, Economic indicators in 2000 clearly showed considerable slowing of the national economy which intensified in 2002 and continues in 2003; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in 1996 the South Carolina General Assembly implemented such measures as School Property Tax Relief, expanded homestead and manufacturer exemptions, expanded vehicle tax exemptions, and vehicle assessment rollbacks, providing no-growth or frozen reimbursement levels on the former and no reimbursement to education funding for the latter; and

WHEREAS, These Acts did not reduce taxes but merely shifted the tax burden between various constituencies during a period of economic growth in the 1990's, the success of the shifts depending heavily on projected growths in sales and other taxes which are historically very sensitive to economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, The less-than-obvious impact of these tax-shifting Acts is continuous upward pressure on local property tax levies paid by citizens to meet unfunded State mandates and to replace zero growth State funding and lost funding from reduction of portions of local tax digests; and

WHEREAS, Primary education in South Carolina has been the proclaimed priority of State Officials during the last decade and earlier, with numerous funding initiatives, earmarked funds, local match requirements, rigid funding mandates and personnel classification systems, and much more; and

WHEREAS, The progressive funding elements have now been all but eliminated and public education in South Carolina is clearly backsliding, yet the earmarking and restrictive use of various State funds, shifting streams of program funding, service mandates, program mandates, and other General Assembly directives continues undaunted; and

WHEREAS, the local funding maintenance mandates continue to significantly exceed the South Carolina Department of Revenue CPI (Consumer Price Index) calculation provided for under the Local Government Fiscal Authority Act (§6-1-320(A)), even as the General Assembly dramatically reduces its own funding contributions to local public education in South Carolina schools; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly appears poised to once again continue its support of increased local property tax burdens on citizens through continuation of tax burden redistributions disguised as tax cuts, frozen or reduced reimbursements for such “tax cuts,” program requirements well beyond what the General Assembly is able and willing to fund itself, shift of failed program burdens to Counties with no appropriate and recurring funding as in the case of vehicle registrations and tags issuance, and numerous other unfunded mandates to local School Districts and Counties across the State; and

WHEREAS, The **Sumter** County School Boards for District Two and District Seventeen and Sumter County Council believe every Citizen of the State of South Carolina should focus attention carefully on each Act and Proviso of their General Assembly, specifically their local Senators, House Representatives, and Statewide Officials, to discern and end the representation of tax burden shifts as tax cuts and to emphasize to their Elected Officials the need for the State of South Carolina to move to the top ten percent of States nationwide in education to prepare our children for the technological future already upon us.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved By The Sumter County Council And The Sumter County School Boards for District Two and District Seventeen Jointly Convened, That We believe that the national economic downturn and subsequent slowing of the economy of the State of South Carolina has been apparent since 2000 and it is time for the General Assembly to do the difficult work necessary to address the problems at the state level without passing the buck to the local taxpayer either directly or through the back door mandates to local government.

Be It Further Resolved, That We request that the South Carolina Constitution be amended to prohibit state mandates on local units of government unless that mandate is fully funded by the state; that equitable and sufficient funding be provided to South Carolina Public Schools

regardless of local tax digest capabilities as required by Federal Law; that the South Carolina General Assembly should enact legislation that revamps funding for education which makes education a state priority without shifting the burden from the South Carolina General Assembly; and that the South Carolina General Assembly recognize and take actions which demonstrate that the State of South Carolina's ability to remain a strong and proud state capable of competing internationally in the 21st Century is heavily dependent upon our commitment to effective, progressive education of our children and the pride each of us takes in our schools and the work of our children in those schools – workforce development is our greatest and most expedient challenge.

Be It Further Resolved, That We request the South Carolina General Assembly provide every public school with nursing services, textbook replacement every five years, consistent technology education and training support, DARE and security officers, funding for competitive recruiting of teachers and administrators, funding for alternative education as well as gifted and talented programs, and facility assistance to achieve a position of admiration within the educational systems of the nation.

Be It Further Resolved, That We hereby invite the South Carolina Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senate President *Pro Tempore*, House Speaker *Pro Tempore*, and the *Sumter County Legislative Delegation* Members to Attend a Joint Worksession of the Sumter County School Boards for District Two and District Seventeen Sumter County Council to Experience Directly the Public Education Improvement and Progress Budgetary Subsistence Challenges Facing Sumter County, such date, time, and Place To Be Determined.

Adopted On May 19, 2003:

Sumter County Council:

Naomi D. Sanders, Chairwoman

James A. Campbell, Vice Chairman

School District Two:

School District Seventeen:

James Giffin, Chairman

Bobby L. Matthews

Roland Robinson, Vice Chairman

Jo R. White